

*OSIRIS AND THE  
MOON*

give the same reason for  
cutting their peats when  
the moon  
Is on the wane ; " for they  
observe that if they are  
cut in  
the increase, they continue  
still moist and never burn  
clear,  
nor are they without  
smoke, but the contrary  
is dally  
observed of peats cut in  
the decrease."

The  
moon,  
being  
viewed  
as

Thus misled  
' by a double  
fallacy primitive  
philosophy  
comes to view the moon  
as the great cause of  
vegetable

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cultu growth, -first, because the  
ral planet seems itself to grow,  
and  
°mlth<sup>ta</sup>is<sup>le</sup> second> because it is  
supposed to be the source of dew  
naturally and moisture. It is no  
wonder, therefore, that agricultural  
by<sup>ra</sup>frt<sup>ped</sup> Peoples should adore the  
planet which they believe to  
influence so profoundly the crops  
on which they depend  
^ subsistence. Accordingly we  
find that in the hotter  
regions of America, where maize is  
cultivated and manioc is  
the staple food, the moon was  
recognized as the principal  
object of worship, and plantations  
of manioc were assigned  
to it as a return for the service it  
rendered in the production  
of the crops. The worship of the  
moon in preference to the  
sun was general among the Caribs,  
and, perhaps, also among  
most of the other Indian tribes who  
cultivated maize in the  
tropical forests to the east of the  
Andes ; and the same  
thing has been observed, under the

same physical conditions, among the aborigines of the hottest region of Peru, the northern valleys of Yuncapata. Here the Indians of Pacamayu and the neighbouring valleys revered the moon as their principal divinity. The "house of the moon" <sup>55</sup> at Pacamayu was the chief temple of the district ; and the same sacrifices of maize-flour, of wine, and of children which were offered by the mountaineers of the Andes to the Sun-god, were offered by the lowlanders to the Moon-god in order that he might cause their crops to thrive.<sup>2</sup> In ancient

<sup>1</sup> M. Martin, "Description of the Western Islands of Scotland," in J. Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, iii, 630.

<sup>2</sup> E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America*^ i. (Oxford, 1892) p. 495. In his remarks on the origin of moon-worship this learned and philosophical historian, has indicated (*qj>*. cit. i. 493 *se/tj.*) the true causes which lead primitive man to trace the growth of plants to the influence of

the moon. Compare Sir E. K. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*" {London, 1873), i. 130. Payne suggests that the custom of naming the months after the principal natural products that ripen in them may have contributed to the same result. The custom is certainly very common among savages, as I hope to show elsewhere, but whether it has contributed to foster the fallacy in question seems doubtful.

The Indians of Brazil are said to